

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN MEDIA COVERAGE LEONE US VISIT

SUMMARY: ITALIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF LEONE VISIT HAS HELPED ITALIAN SELF-ESTEEM AND GONE A LONG WAY TOWARD REDUCING (NOT REMOVING) PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED CONCERNS AS TO US AND NATO ROLES IN ITALY AND ITALIAN AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN PRESS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE OF LEONE VISIT HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND, FOR MOST PART, FACTUAL. HEAVY EMPHASIS HAS BEEN GIVEN TO WARMTH OF RECEPTION AND T PROTOCOLAIRE ASPECTS. THIS, PLUS STATESMAN-LIKE NATURE OF TALKS, AS EVIDENCED IN JOINT STATEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 26, TENDS TO RESTORE ITALIAN SENSE OF DIGNITY, OF ITALY'S IMAGE IN ITS OWN EYES AND THOSE OF THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THE US. EXAMPLES: "IF SUCCESS OF LEONE MISSION CAN BE JUDGED BY APPLAUSE, WARM WELCOME AND TOASTS, THEN VISIT MUST BE CONSIDERED QUITE A SUCCESS SINCE ITS FIRST DAY" (MESSAGERO); "IMPORTANCE THAT WASHINGTON ATTACHES TO ITALY AS 'ESSENTIAL FACTOR' IN WESTERN STRUCTURE" (CORRIERE DELLA SERA); FORD ADMINISTRATION

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WANTS TO ABANDON ITS TRADITIONAL ATTITUDE OF "FRIENDLY

INFIDDERENCE" TOWARD ITALY (STAMPA); "DIALOGUE WITH GREAT POWERS ON PLANE OF DIGNITY AND CONSTRUCTIVNESS" (MESSAGERO); AMERICANS "SEE US AS ALREADY OF AGE AND ABLE TO REASON ON PROBLEMS WHICH BELING TO US RATHER THAN TO THEM" (STAMPA).

2. COVERAGE HAS TENDED TO DE-FUZE TWO MAJOR CONCERNS WHICH EMERGED PRIOR TO VISITS, MOSTLY IN LEFT-OF CENTER PRESS: SHIFTING OF NATO FACILITIES TO ITALY FROM GREECE, AND POSSIBLE INTRUSION OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE INTO DOMESTIC POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS ("HISTORIC COMPROMISE"), EVEN THOUGH . . . CONCESSION OF NATO BASES WERE NOT DISCUSSED, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT AMERICANS DO NOT INTEND TO ABANDON ITALY TO ITS DIFFICULT PROBLEMS" (GIORNALE); "NO REQUEST FOR NATO BASES WAS MADE; THE US DOES NOT CONSIDER IMMINENT, OR INEVITABLE IN SHORT RUN A CHANGE IN ITALIAN POLITICAL BALANCE (THAT IS, INCLUSION OF COMMUNISTS IN GOVERNMENT); AMERICA ASSURES US ITS HELP IN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY FIELDS" (GIORNO); AMERICANS "FEEL UPSET BECAUSE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WOULD WEAKEN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, AND EXPECT LEONE TO EXPRESS HIS OPINION ON THE MATTER" (STAMPA).

3. MEDIA ALSO GAVE WIDEFAVORABLE COVERAGE TO US SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE ON ITALY'S ECONOMIC PLIGHT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE FEW CARPING COMMENTS, ATTRIBUTED TO UNNAMED ITALIANS ASSO- CIATED WITH THE VISIT, TO THE EFFECT OF QUOTE BIG PROMISES, NO MONEY, UNQUOTE ETC.

4. L'UNITA TENDED TO IGNORE THE VISIT, WITH BRIEF FACTUAL REPORTS PREFERRING TO EMPHASIZE REACTIONS TO FORD AND KISSINGER ON ENERGY PROBLEMS. VITTORIO ZUCCONI OF LA STAMPA PURPORTEDLY QUOTED ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN'S BRIEF COMMENTS TO HIM AT SECRETARY'S LUNCHEON FOR LEONE AS: PCI NEW LOOK (ON EUROPE, NATO, ETC.) IS QUOTE ALL TACTICAL MANEUVER. UNTIL THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS DEMONSTRATE WITH FACTS AND NOT WITH WORDS THAT THEY HAVE ABANDONED THEIR PREJUDICIAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AMERICA WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LOOK WITH FAVOR ON THEIR ENTRY INTO GOVERNMENT. UNQUOTE

5. COMMENT: ON ALANCE COVERAGE HAS PERHAPS BEEN MORE FAVORABLE THAN WE MIGHT HAVE ANTICIPATED A MONTH AGO. BEAUDRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TAGS: PFOR, US, IT, (LEONE, GIOVANNI)
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